

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SHB 2635

C 159 L 08

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding school district boundaries and organization.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Education (originally sponsored by Representative Quall).

House Committee on Education

House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education

Background:

The procedures that govern school district organization and reorganization, including district boundaries and changes in boundaries, are established in statute.

Regional Committees. Each Educational Service District (ESD) has a Regional Committee responsible for approving and disapproving proposals to change school district organization and adjusting the property and assets and liabilities that result from changes in district organization. Regional Committees are composed of seven to nine members, depending on the size of the ESD board of directors, and are elected by the voters in each ESD board member district. The election requirements and procedures are detailed in statute.

The ESD superintendents are responsible for providing staff and technical support for the Regional Committees and overseeing the procedures involved in school district organization decisions and disputes.

If districts affected by a change in organization are located in two ESDs, involvement of both Regional Committees is required, as well as creation of a third temporary joint committee if the two do not agree.

Transfer of Territory. The process for transfer of territory between one district and another emphasizes negotiated agreement among the districts wherever possible. A proposal to transfer territory can be initiated:

- (1) by a petition signed by a majority of the school board members of one of the affected districts; or
- (2) by a petition signed by more than 50 percent of active registered voters in the territory proposed for transfer.

Once petitions have been initiated by transmission to the ESD superintendent, the affected school districts must negotiate regarding the proposed transfer. There are timelines for the negotiation, including the opportunity to receive a mediator appointed by the ESD. If the

districts agree, the property is either transferred or not, depending on the agreement. If the districts do not agree, either district may request a hearing and decision by the Regional Committee. Further appeals are possible.

Review Criteria. The statutes contain a number of review criteria that Regional Committees are required to consider in their deliberations about school district organization proposals. One of the review criteria provides for consideration of the history and relationship of the property to the communities affected. A specific example is called out: inclusion in a single school district for purposes of school attendance and tax support of master planned communities with more than 1,000 units. There are no other specific references to growth management issues in the review criteria.

Summary:

Regional Committees. Rather than being elected, members of Regional Committees are appointed by the ESD board for four-year terms. Members previously elected serve out the remainder of their terms. Any vacancies are filled by appointment.

If school districts affected by a change in organization are in two ESDs, the Regional Committee and the ESD of the district with the largest number of affected students have jurisdiction, rather than requiring a temporary joint committee. An incorrect reference to Regional Committees and director district boundaries is removed.

Transfer of Territory. A petition to transfer territory that is initiated by a school board must provide documentation that, before signing the petition, the board notified the affected school board and provided time for response, and notified voters residing in the territory and provided opportunity for comment at a public hearing.

Review Criteria. Regional Committees must consider the impact of the Growth Management Act and current or proposed urban growth areas, city boundaries, and master planned communities in their deliberations about school district boundaries and organization. They are no longer restricted to considering master planned communities of a particular size.

Votes on Final Passage:

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| House | 95 | 0 | |
| Senate | 48 | 0 | (Senate amended) |
| House | 94 | 0 | (House concurred) |

Effective: June 12, 2008